1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

431 which follow a request for assistance. The meat of large game animals is always readily distributed, even when a family is living with unrelated people. Other spontaneous gifts are made relatively rarely and then only in well defined cultural contexts. The most common of these presents include purchased trade goods; manufactures, such as moccasins; meat, berries, and brew. A few people exchange purchased trade goods at Christmas. Native manufactures may be given by a woman to her husband or brother. Spontaneous gifts, excepting meat, are frequently reciprocated within a few days or weeks and such reciprocity is usually expected, although not clearly formalized. Hospitality may be recognized as a special form of free gift giving, but is not carried to extremes and few people visit for any length of time without supplying their own grub. Persistent demands for hospitality are, first covertly and then soon overtly, resented, since, particularly in the winter settlement, the supply of grub is limited and often barely enough to see a family through to spring.

Most gifts follow a call for assistance. Such requests may be outright, but are more generally advanced by implication. It is far more satisfactory if a person has his offhand statement of being low on raisins or moosehide fulfilled by a gift of such goods than if he has to request the objects directly. Although requests are commonly fulfilled, this is not necessarily done in a spirit of generosity and the realization of covert resentment operates to reduce calls for help. In return for his response, however, the donor enhances his reputation for generosity. Nevertheless this reputation dare not be too widely advertised, for fear that it will boomerang in the form of additional requests. Actually more people were described to the ethnographer as being stingy than were praised for their generosity. The [609] reluctance of most people to make demands for goods or grub, particularly to non-relatives, also prevents a person's generosity from being abused. It is more or less understood that following assistance, the recipient will reciprocate the favor when he is called upon to do so. Actually many people chronically seek help without being able to contribute anything but cooperation in return, and this they are usually very unwilling to offer. The result is that the onus of giving rests upon a few older men who have been able to accumulate food and goods and who are generally extremely resentful of the role in which they are placed. Their antagonism reveals itself in ungenerous giving which in turn does not pass unnoticed and stimulates resentment in neighbors.

426 Loans differ from gifts in that they are made with the stronger expectation of the return of the object or its equivalent. Capital goods, as we have shown, are readily loaned. Grub, on the other hand, being more valuable, is more reluctantly shared in this fashion. Loans of money are occasionally made in summer with no interest being charged. It is not infrequent that loans fail to be repaid. Old Man reported lending skins to his son-in-law, Hans, who needed supplies but had no money. "I did it," Old Man said, "but he never let me have it [back]. If he stranger man, I bother him, but no use—he marry my daughter."

425 A final word may be added concerning the relatively rare incidence of the destruction
768 of goods. This is limited to the worn clothes of the deceased, which are burned or abandoned after death, the rationalization being that they may carry disease and in this way threaten the surviving members of a family. A tent in which death has occurred is also sometimes abandoned for the same reason. Food of any kind is never destroyed.

428 *Inheritance.* Like most of the property transactions already referred to, the processes of

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

yardage at the head is then folded across the face. The shrouded body is laid on a blanket, a towel sometimes being used as a head rest. All the belongings of the deceased are removed from the death house to await distribution or destruction. When Old Lady Metla died at Old Man's place, her knees were found to be almost irremediably flexed from the fact that she had spent so many years kneeling and sitting on the ground at her work. After the body was shrouded, a packsack filled with clothing was placed across her knees in order to level them. When questioned as to why flexed knees were undesirable, Old Man explained they would require the construction of a larger coffin.

After the body has been washed and dressed it is left in the house or tent where death took place until the completion of the coffin. Some people may, in winter, keep a small fire burning near the body and also maintain a vigil candle. In general, however, the death place is avoided as much as possible and children are not permitted to play nearby.

Burial as soon after death as possible is the ideal and construction of a coffin is begun almost immediately. Several reasons are given for the desire to inter the deceased so quickly. In the first place, the removal of the spectacle of death relieves the bereavement of close kin. The evidence of death is also a reminder to others of their past losses and hence is depressing. Finally, the intense mourning of close kin, which is apt to be relieved by the final disposition of the corpse, is also depressing to neighbors. During the period that the deceased remains in the tent or cabin, the other occupants of the dwelling live with friends or erect a new residence.

Any other disposition of the corpse than burial in the ground is distasteful. A body should also be interred in a "nice place." "If they throw in the water," Edward Cross said, "No good. People can't go see graveyard."

The construction of the coffin is generally undertaken by a man who is recognized as being skilled in the task. He is assisted in the whipsawing and planing of the lumber, although in Lower Post readymade lumber is purchased. Before whipsawing begins, the measurement of the corpse is taken with a piece of string and considerable care is taken not to cut more boards than are required. If extra lumber remains after the completion of the coffin, somebody else in camp will die. The lumber is trimmed to make the foot portion of the coffin several inches narrower than the head (Plate 12, c). The scene of the construction of the "box," as the coffin is referred to, is not avoided. When the coffin and its cover are completed, their exterior surfaces are covered with a layer of any available material. This is tacked on the four exterior sides of the box, overlapping into the interior and along the bottom; it is also used to cover the exterior of the cover. When the draping of the coffin was observed in connection with Metla's burial, Paulette Donnelly helped her husband cut the material for his grandmother's coffin while that man and his brother-in-law tacked the goods in place (Plate 12, a). The finished coffin is transported to the place where the body is waiting. After the body has been placed in the box and the lid hammered into place, the coffin is transported to the burial ground. A small burial area is generally located close to each winter settlement, the few graves being marked by simple crosses on which individuals' names are sometimes crudely pencilled. Sometimes a fence is constructed around the graves, "So dogs don't come around" (Plate 12, b). Two large graveyards are located in Lower Post. These are maintained in an extremely poor condition, being thickly overgrown with sagee,

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

box, while two men supported the lower portion. The top poles were pulled free. The men at the upper end of the pit ordered the lower end to be lowered as far as possible whereupon he let his own end drop into the grave, the length and width of which barely accommodated the coffin. The rope was then pulled up. Old Man, removing one mitten, bent down and tossed a handful of earth on top of the coffin. Mrs. Man and Lady Sam followed suit, but without removing their mittens. Harry and Hans then began to shovel dirt into the grave and the other people started returning to the settlement. During the digging of the grave only Lady Sam was tense and weepy. The other people, including the working men, chatted of many things without any show of sentiment. 764

Mourning by closely related kin may continue for several months, morning being a time when a woman will feel particularly sad and apt to cry. In time the intensity of mourning wears off. It is, however, often promoted when women are intoxicated, weeping or even sobbing for long deceased children being a characteristic feature of women's drinking. 765

Sometime after the interment of the deceased, the clothing worn by the individual at the time of death is burned. Any other possessions, such as packsacks and blankets, which are worn out or old and not desired by relatives as mementos, are also destroyed. Other possessions, like guns, files, axes, and snowshoes are distributed to relatives and friends. Good quality blankets and eiderdowns, after being kept out of use for a time, are thoroughly washed with soap and water and reused for future use by members of the deceased person's family. Certain decorative possessions, such as fancy moccasins or an ornamented dog harness, are kept as mementos by a surviving parent, a spouse, or child. A woman may also keep her dead mother's tanning tools. Old Man reported that he could never leave his parents' home for if he started to "move around" he would lose clothing and other objects that had been associated with his dead son and to which he wanted to hold on. He still used his deceased daughter's silver plated cup, referring to it as "the ghost cup." The dwelling in which the person died remains uninhabited for a week or two and is then reoccupied. Sometimes a tent frame or tent is permanently abandoned following death. 768

Following the death of a husband or wife, young children may be raised by the surviving spouse or given in adoption. A man will generally entrust the care of his children to his mother-in-law. When Mary Wiley's husband died in the spring of 1945, the latter's brother, Edward Cross, took the widow to his trap line. Old Man explained that Edward did not want his sister-in-law to "run around" too soon after her husband's death. It is felt that a widow should wait at least a year before seeking new attachments. Following the death of her husband, a woman retains his name until she remarries.

As participants of the Roman Catholic Church, most of the Kaska have been taught to pray for the dead. Such prayers, however, are rarely said outside of church services. Following the burial of the body, there is little tendency to revisit the graveyard. In the fall of 1945, River Joe asked his son-in-law, Louis Moon, to construct a fence around the plot where Joe's wife and Louis' baby were buried. Following the completion of the fence, he placed a purchased gravestone over his wife's grave. A few days before this occasion Joe accompanied his son-in-law to Old Knee's place, where the rest of the Upper Liard Indians were temporarily staying, and invited them to share a brew. There would be a "little party," he explained, to celebrate the erection of the stone and the completion of the graveyard fence. A 765 [767] [768] 764 [761]

59 generally they lived with the bridegroom's people and only visited the friends of the bride.

Whether the husband stayed chiefly with his wife's people or his own did not matter, for during his
[431] life time he was under obligation to give presents of food or other things to his wife's parents from time to time, and this was always expected of him. The wife was considered the property of her husband and his people, but this did not mean that others of his male relatives or phratry had any rights of intercourse with her, at least during her husband's life-time. Their
[611] children, if they had any, belonged by right to the wife's people, being by descent members of their mother's phratry.

768 In case of death of their father or mother the children, if young, were taken in charge by their mo-
[687] ther's people. It seems this was more particularly the case if the mother died and the father did not marry his
582 deceased wife's sister. Marriages between members of different clans and bands were encouraged because of the advantage of thus securing the right of hunting in different grounds.

Early marriages were believed in and most girls were married soon after they had finished their training at puberty. It is stated there were even some cases where girls were married before they were mature or had become pubescent.

be able to wake up early as the raven does". 765

These ceremonies were supposed to make persons energetic, good workers, early risers, etc., and help them to retain these qualities even in old age. They continued to be <u>Ō'tcīng</u> for four days. They then discarded their special dress and afterwards acted like other people.

Generally one year or a little over after a 768
person's death, the nearest relative gives a feast at which all the debts of the deceased are paid off. Just previous to the paying off ceremony a deceased man's relatives and clan kin gathered together to discuss his succession and the disposal of his property etc. To the meeting, his property was brought and his wife had to be present. The nearest oldest relative took charge of the proceedings. He asked the unmarried men in order of their age and relationship who of them would take the widow, name, place, and house of the deceased. If one of them agreed, then the widow and the house were given to him and an entire half of the deceased's moveable property became the mutual property of himself and the widow. The other half was divided among the deceased's relatives. On the man agreeing to take the widow, they were at once united, the half share of the property was handed to them and the widow took her place as his bed-mate the same night. In the event of no one

[614] consenting to take the widow and name, etc., of the deceased, the whole property was thereupon divided among the relatives. The widow was not free until after the paying ceremony for the deceased or otherwise not until given her freedom by the deceased's relatives. This was generally done at the paying ceremony if no one of her deceased husband's relatives cared to have her. Occasionally one of the relatives changed his mind and took the widow before the "paying ceremony". Sometimes a widow became very much insulted and angry when all the relatives refused to take her and she thereupon went off and commenced to live with another man. This was considered unlawful and sometimes caused much jealousy and much talk. Usually however the relatives let the matter drop.

[615] The feast for the deceased is really given to the members of the opposite phretry, but everybody within convenient reach attends. The guests arrive dressed in ceremonial or dancing costume; speeches are made relative to the deceased, his life, death, debts, etc. At the feast food was given in a ceremonial way to the spirit, soul or ghost of the deceased. This food was put in the fire and burned. At the same time the deceased was advised of the gift by the people or person in charge saying "We give you this food". In addressing the deceased his name was not mentioned nor was the common word for

'give' used.

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The feast and paying ceremony generally lasted from two to four days, depending a good deal on the rank and prominence of the deceased and his family. The guests or members of the opposite phratry did most of the dancing and singing. In some of the songs they eulogised the deceased and his family. A special class of songs was used at these ceremonies. I have collected some of these songs. One of the songs belongs to the Talakoten clan of the Wolf phratry. The words used in it are "I have lost a good thing, my nephew". The singer in these words regrets the loss of his nephew who was a good man. The other two are katcédé songs. In one of them the words are "My uncle, have you gone for good (have you gone never to return)"? The reference is to the person's deceased uncle for whom he is paying. In the other, the words are "My uncle, you are the same as meltenetegūz" (an instrument used to rasp over the flesh and make the blood come. Used in ceremonies by some men to make them healthy, strong, powerful etc.). The inference is that through the death of his uncle, for whom he is paying, he has been made strong (in property or rank etc.). Other words are "Perhaps I am not so strong as you are (or were) to think". When the guests heard these words in the song they expected he would show his strength by making

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big payments etc. In the singing of these ceremonial songs, a second person assisting in the singing of the song repeats the words of the leading singer. Words were often used extempore in these songs. On the last day of the feast all outstanding debts of the deceased were paid and payments made to all members of the opposite phratry who had assisted in any way or done any service in connection with the funeral and cremation, etc., of the deceased. All obligations on account of the latter were now forever discharged.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

respect to beaver is partly explicable in terms of the animal's habit of remaining and reproducing within a relatively circumscribed district unless population pressure forces migration of the excess stock. Thus in most years Indians could depend upon being able to find food wherever beaver lodges were known to exist.

Of movable goods a man owned the bark and wood dishes, as well as the eating utensils which he made for his family, his own tools, caches (but not the food upon them), personal clothing, canoe, weapons, toboggan, personal snowshoes, and masks. A woman owned the bark- and spruce-root vessels that she manufactured, personal tools, the dwelling, food, prepared skins, personal clothing, all lines except those which she had given to her husband, and paints. Meat on a cache or freshly killed game cannot be considered the exclusive property of either the hunter or his family because the community felt and exercised a claim on such food. Failure to meet this expectation in the case of large game animals aroused resentment. In a sense children owned their toys as well as personal clothing and snowshoes. The mother controlled a child's possessions but they could not be disposed of outside the family, even by lending without the child's permission. By virtue of the control which parents claimed over a young person's nominal possessions they were able to use the latter freely. Although death might be followed by the destruction of some goods belonging to the deceased the custom did not have as its purpose transmission of wealth to the ghost. In the absence of grave goods people did not conceive of the ghost as owning anything. Even the burial clothes worn by the corpse "belonged to nobody."

Aside from one's name, ownership did not attach toward intangible goods. Nobody exercised individual control over songs or folk tales but it is likely that every man enjoyed some exclusive rights over the magical songs which he had dreamed on the vision quest.

Inheritance norms pertained to names and material goods alone.[34] Following death one half of a man's possessions went to his brother while the children divided the other half. Personal items were destroyed. A son usually acquired the scalps taken in battle. The widow might receive a share of the goods to which her brother-in-law enjoyed paramount rights, but her inclusion in inheritance does not appear to have been rigorously enforced. A man could marry his widowed sister-in-law or else could dispose of her to another husband but it is probably incorrect to list this pattern in a discussion of chattels. A woman's wealth fell to the widower, who customarily gave all or most of it to his brother's wife. The knife employed to sever the umbilical cord became the property of a woman's daughter.

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a lot of trouble between different tribes is started, also amongst the tribe itself." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 9.) Among the Tsapagotena (Beaver Indians of Fort Liard, perhaps the same group to which McLean refers), "when an Indian discovers one or more beaver lodges, if not already appropriated, he immediately puts his mark upon them, and no one dares to intrude upon his property without his permission, although I know of no punishment inflicted upon the guilty party unless it be the infamy attached to the action, which is considered as very mean and heinous." Keith, *Letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie* (1890), 69.

[34] For the inheritance of names see below, p. 141.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

766 The bodies of men who had died in warfare remained where they had fallen. Abandonment of a corpse also occurred when starvation killed many people and left the survivors too weak (and too few?) to undertake disposal of the corpse.

One informant (X), who had been born in the Fort Simpson area, spoke of tree burial. His reference may have been to customs prevailing there. The same man denied cremation for the "Kaska," saying that the practice had been confined to the Tahltan.[a] For tree burial an ordinary platform cache was constructed between three or four trees. The unflexed corpse, wrapped in a skin, was lifted to the stage and left there. The disposal of bodies on elevated caches was unusual according to our principal upper Liard River informant (O). He knew of one case where a man had specifically asked for such treatment and people granted his request. For an orphaned baby people sometimes constructed a diminutive spruce-bark canoe in which they placed the live child wrapped in blankets. Then they launched the vessel. This pattern of canoe "burial" occurred only when nobody could rear the small orphan. Tradition says that once a child survived its voyage to be reared by a beaver, from whose teats it nursed.

765 Following disposal of the corpse the close relatives of the deceased, including siblings, sons, daughters, and spouses, cut their hair to about the length customary in American society. A person of the opposite group did the cutting. Sometimes a parent detached [304] a finger at the death of a child or an old woman might pound her chest with a stone following a grandchild's departure. Mutilation tended to be rare, however. Relatives also covered themselves with ashes or blackened their faces with charcoal to advertise their anguish. "For about a year" after the loss of her husband a widow refrained from washing.[b] Women led the wailing at death and continued the practice periodically for several months or a year. Sunrise and sunset constituted favorite times for wailing. Widows and widowers passed the year abstaining from porcupine and beaver meat. They might die if they broke this avoidance. To prevent the loss of additional children a bereaved mother lost little time before she resumed sewing and cutting with knife or ax. As already explained, a widow remained in control of her brother-in-law, who had 768 to consent before she could take a new spouse. Generally a widow avoided remarriage or cohabitation for one or two years lest the husband's ghost claim her out of pique.

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send him back to earth, and leave him there until such time as he thinks he has punished him enough when he will be taken back and he will be received with the same honor as a good Indian." Field, *Unpublished manuscript* (1913), 11–12.

Among the Tlingit articles of clothing and bedding were interred with the deceased along with a vessel of water. A death feast was celebrated in honor of the dead and to feed his spirit as it travels "and to pay off all who have any claim on the family of the deceased for any services rendered in their bereavement." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 149. Swanton refers to feasts following cremation in his *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 431.

[a] Tahltan warriors who had died in a foreign country might be cremated where they had fallen and the bones then transported back home.

[b] "Widows paint their faces black as a sign of mourning . . . sometimes the living shaved their heads as a sign of mourning, and widows cut their hair." Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 152. Cf. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 429–430.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

A widower also had to remain single for a time. No visits took place to the burial ground. People avoided that area because of their fear of ghosts. 768

Beigabes remained conspicuously absent, objects being neither burned nor buried with a corpse. After the body had been disposed of the deceased's clothing, to which the ghost might be attached sentimentally, together with the dwelling in which death had occurred, were burned. Informants said that the destruction of the house helped to get rid of the illness lurking there. We are not certain in our mind if this statement represents an awareness of contagion, nor if the explanation has been derived from European sources. Certain objects of the deceased like knives, unworn clothing, arrows, snowshoes, and tanning tools were distributed as mementoes by a surviving brother. Close relatives shared in these goods. Food left by the deceased went to the opposite moiety, probably in the death feast.[44] It is by no means clear whether a dead person's name was regularly inherited at a memorial potlatch. Sometimes, at any rate such names did come to be assumed by the oldest surviving, like-sexed sibling (real or classificatory) or by a deceased's brother's son or sister's daughter. These heirs directed the potlatch which, coming about a year after death, terminated the period of mourning.

Dease River Kaska. Old men possessed enhanced supernatural power, their longevity being a result of "good living." Such a belief perhaps compensated them for the disabilities brought about by age. An informant claimed that the aged were never abandoned but provided with walking sticks that helped them keep up with travelers. When incapable of walking the old were carried on the backs of strong, young relatives and drawn on toboggans. Sometimes people delegated a young relative to fish and otherwise care for an oldster until the group returned with some meat. 888

The origin of death is given in a tale recorded by Teit as constituting Bear's revenge for the theft of fire. Had it not been for Bear's interference constant renewal of life would have been the rule.[45] Death denoted the complete separation of wind (tuntaj'uc) and body. The wind continued to exist in one of two afterworlds. The souls of good people went to "heaven" and "God" while the evil found punishment in the company of the devil. The informant volunteered little concerning life after death. Prompting elicited admission of a path leading to a large body of water that had to be crossed in a boat. Crow might have operated the ferry. Only good people enjoyed reincarnation, the wind returning to life in an infant of opposite sex.[46] The appearance of a ghost (tsunetsina) provided a frightening experience. 761 776 775

[44] Among the Pelly River people "the dead person's goods, if he has any, is packed up by the head of the family. That . . . of any value are cached, the rest is either thrown into the river or burned after a year or two. The valuable stuff is then divided amongst the relatives of the dead person . . . it would be given to the mvens if the dead person happened to be a wolf or vice versa." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 13.) The Tlingit destroyed food and property with the aim of sending it on to the deceased "who then actually received its spiritual counterpart." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 431; see also 429–430.

[45] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443–444.

[46] Among the Tahltan "there is a strong belief in the rebirth of souls. A deceased relative is often born again by a mother, aunt, sister, or other relative. . . . The dead go to three different places: a

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tsalona
Frances Lake

764 765 768 Everyone in camp assembled when death seemed inevitable. Long ago bodies were disposed of by cremation and the Tahltan continued the custom a long time after the Dease River people began to inter their dead in the ground. Coffins as well as any form of tree burial were denied. Members of the opposite moiety handled the corpse. Mourning rites included hair cutting but not mutilation. The dwelling in which death had taken place as well as most of the possessions left by the deceased came to an end by destruction, a practice designed to avoid illness.

761 764 765 768 *Tsalona.* Death followed when the wind deserted the body and journeyed to an afterworld about which the informant knew little. The corpse was cremated and the bones intered in a small pit about one foot deep. Anyone who had handled the corpse avoided food and drink for two days but no particular relatives were charged with this responsibility. Elevated cache and canoe burials could not be recalled. In mourning a widow cut short her hair, fasted for several days, and wore ragged clothing. At night she slept little, deliberateiy keeping herself awake by means of sharp sticks planted under her head. Her plans for remarriage demanded the approval of her brother-in-law [304] or he might wed her himself. Scarification, face blackening, and hair singeing were denied. A widower observed food and drink taboos but did not cut his hair.

Property destruction following death was denied.

774 761 775 *Frances Lake Kaska.* A person's wind or soul, located in the stomach, resembled the breath or the air that one inhaled. Just as breathing sustained life the loss of the wind (breath) produced death. The informant denied that there could be a temporary alienation of body and wind. The soul continued to survive after quitting the body and if it had belonged to a good man became reincarnated. Following death the ghost (tsune), which was always dangerous, remained in the neighborhood for a period ranging from ten days to a year. During this time it hunted, copulated with women, visited its birthplace, and completed any tasks that the deceased throughout his life had left uncompleted. In appearance the ghost resembled a living Indian but could only be seen and not sensed tactually. Ghosts also avenged themselves for injuries that had been sustained in life. To announce themselves they sometimes whistled. Knocking did not constitute a ghostly signature.

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rather cool, dingy place underground to the west; a light agreeable place on the same level as the earth to the east; and a place above in the sky. Only people killed in battle go to the last. Sometimes they come out, and dance as the aurora. When the latter consist of red clouds, people say there is a war somewhere. When the streamers of the aurora descend, forming a kind of chute, it is said that the spirits are receiving a brave warrior whose soul ascends through this chute, and is borne away as the streamers ascend. The sky heaven is said to be the best abode. That to the east is somewhat like this earth, but better in so far as food is always abundant. Most people go to it. They have to descend a slippery hill, and cross a river. Some are afraid, and turn back to be reborn again, or wander about until they reach the place of shades in the west where conditions are not as good as in the other places, and food is often scarce. Teit, *Ou Tahltan* (*Athabaskan*) *Work* (1912), 486. Cf. Speck, *Naskapi* (1935), 51, who also speaks of the dead appearing in the northern lights.